

Municipality could be improved and the institution made more useful. This was by levying tolls on buses and cars that plied through the municipal area. More than 100 such vehicles passed through the town daily. It was only reasonable that they should be made to contribute a small share of their profit to the Municipality. The Government had allowed the levy of tolls in the case of some Municipalities in the State, such as Attingal and Tiruvella, thus giving them an opportunity to stabilise their revenues. The levy of tolls would also enable the Municipal Council to afford some relief to the people from the heavy house-tax that has been brought to bear on them. The Haripad Municipal Council had passed many resolutions urging on the Government to sanction the levy of tolls, but the Government had not yet accorded the necessary sanction. Early sanction should be accorded for the purpose.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Raja Raja Varma Koiltampuran, the right to levy tolls has been claimed by several Municipal Councils. I shall call together shortly a conference of all Municipalities to discuss and settle the question of maintenance of roads by them. When that has been settled, the question of the right of Councils to levy tolls will be taken up for disposal.

68. Municipal reforms.

MR. V. K. OOMMAN (*Municipal Council, Mavelikara*) first spoke about the necessity for amending the Municipal Regulation, V of 1095. The provisions of the Regulation which were copied from British India without adequate reference to the needs of the State, were unsuitable to local conditions. Further, it was more than 12 years since the Regulation was passed and the times were so changed as to necessitate the early amendment of the Regulation. Many of the Sections of the Regulation were vaguely worded and more interpretations than one were possible in the case of several of them. Sections 61, 81, 84, and 233 were instances in point. Section 241 gave power to Sanitary Inspectors to prosecute people even without the specific sanction of the Council. There were cases of such prosecutions as well as compoundings by them without the knowledge of the Council. Again, a vehicle registered in one Municipality and paying tax to that Municipality, was forced to pay toll to another Municipality, when it passed through its limits. If the owner of the vehicle applied for registration in such Municipality also, the application was refused, as income by way of tolls was more advantageous than the payment of registration tax. Such a practice was undesirable and should be put an end to. There were other similar instances which would show the need for amending the Municipal Regulation. A committee should be appointed to go into the question of amending the Regulation so as to make it suitable to local conditions.

Another point urged by the member was the absence of uniformity in the bye-laws of the several Municipalities. There were some bye-laws which were against the provisions of the Regulation. The bye-laws should be translated and published for the information and guidance of the public.

The appointment of a Municipal Commissioner or Inspector and the starting of a Municipal Gazette would be of immense use for effecting uniformity in municipal administration and co-ordinating the work of the different Municipalities in the State.

The practice of reducing or disallowing certain items in the budgets prepared by the Councils by the Government was not desirable. The Council only could know the actual needs of the Municipality. Many of the Municipalities had no money to spend for such useful works as sanitation, watering of roads, etc. The Government should allot necessary funds for such purposes. Greater attention should also be paid to the sanitation, provision of public latrines and urinals, improvement of lanes, etc., within municipal limits. The Government should direct the Sanitary Commissioner to inspect the Municipalities, examine in detail such questions and suggest ways and means for improving their condition. Government should render financial assistance, whenever necessary, to carry out these suggestions.

The Municipalities, the financial condition of which was not sound, should be abolished. No useful work could be turned out by such bodies. A commission should be appointed to investigate into the financial condition of the several Municipalities in the State. Minor Municipalities which were doing no useful work could be abolished with advantage and Village Panchayats established in their places.

All the municipal tolls should be abolished. There was absolutely no justification for collecting tolls in any of the Municipalities. The Legislative Council had passed a resolution recommending the abolition of even the tolls levied by the Public Works Department.

The practice of municipal Councillors electing the Presidents for their Councils was undesirable. The Presidents should be elected by all the voters. This would prevent incompetent men, who managed to get five or six votes from the Councillors, from getting the Presidencies of the Councils.

Local self-government and municipal administration were matters of very vital importance in the governance of a country and should be handled carefully by able men. There was no member in the Legislative Council to represent the Municipal Councils. Two members, one from the north and another from the south as in the case of the Commerce and Industry constituencies, should be elected from among the Municipal Councillors.

Lastly, the member urged the desirability of holding municipal conferences, as the same would give ample opportunities for exchanging ideas and views on local self-government between persons from various places. The Government did little or nothing for holding such conferences. The Government should insist on the Municipalities holding such conferences and should help such undertaking by liberal grants.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Oomman, as I told the previous speaker, the drafting of a Bill to amend the present Municipal Regulation is being done. The City Municipal Bill for Trivandrum has been drafted, and the Mofussil Municipalities Bill is under preparation. Your suggestions will be considered.

69. The problems of the Alleppey Municipal Council.

MR. M. S. ANIRUDHAN (*Municipal Council, Alleppey*) at the outset congratulated the Dewan on his appointment and wished him all success in his administration. He said that Alleppey was one of the major Municipalities of the State and was the emporium of trade in Travancore. Under income tax and customs duty, Alleppey contributed the largest share to the public exchequer. The commercial and industrial development of the State was indissolubly connected with the improvement of the Alleppey town, but it was highly regrettable that with all its importance the Government completely neglected the town.

The most important problem to face was the question of water supply to the town. Good water was a rare commodity in the town. The Government had not yet bestowed any serious attention on the subject and the question of water supply was being indefinitely postponed. There was a proposal to supply Alwaye water to the Cochin Harbour. If the Government were prepared to co-operate with the Harbour Board, the Alleppey water supply problem could be easily solved. If there was any difficulty in this, water could be brought from Kottayam or from the Pamba river. The proposed Kottayam-Alleppey road, if opened, would facilitate the working of the scheme to a great extent. The unhealthy and insanitary condition of the town could be remedied only by a protected water supply scheme.

A well qualified Health Officer should be appointed for the Alleppey Municipality, as in the case of the Trivandrum Municipality. The death rate from small-pox, typhoid fever and other infectious diseases was very high in the Alleppey town. Mortality from tuberculosis was also comparatively high in the town. The Municipality was seriously handicapped in undertaking preventive measures for want of proper advice regarding public health and sanitation. In view of the emergency of the matter, the Municipality had appointed, as a temporary measure, a medical graduate, to advise the Municipal Council on matters of public health and sanitation. The Government should appoint a permanent Health Officer in the Municipality at an early date.

For the past three years small-pox had been raging in an epidemic form in the Alleppey town and the neighbouring places. As the outskirts of the town were overcrowded and were beyond the control of the Municipal Council, the sanitary arrangements made in times of epidemics were rendered ineffective. The matter had been brought to the notice of the Government but nothing tangible was done to improve the situation. The existing small-pox sheds, under the control